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Mrs. O. F. Short.

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MRS. O. F. SHORT.

MARCH 16, 1878.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

Mr. HENDERSON, from the Committee of Claims, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 1176.]

The Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1176) for the relief of Mrs. O. F. Short, of Kansas, having had the same under consideration, beg leave to report:

That the bill in this case provides for the payment to Mrs. Celia C. Short, of Lawrence, Kansas, widow of the late Oliver F. Short, United States deputy surveyer, the sum of \$10,000, as a just compensation to her for the loss of her husband and son, who were murdered by Indians.

The facts are, as shown by the papers and evidence referred to the committee, that on the 8th day of July, 1874, the said O. F. Short, the husband of the claimant, and one Abram Outler entered into a contract with C. W. Babcock, surveyor-general of the United States for the State of Kansas, for the survey of certain lands in that State, for which they were to receive a certain specified compensation; and while engaged in the execution of said contract the said O. F. Short and his son, a boy about fourteen years of age, were, on the 24th day of August, A. D. 1874, killed by some Cheyenne Indians.

While the committee sympathize with the claimant in the loss of her husband and son, they are of the opinion that the claim for compensation against the United States cannot be recognized as a just claim.

The contract entered into by the husband of the claimant was a voluntary one on his part, and was entered into for a compensation agreed to be paid to him and for his benefit; and the committee are of the opinion that the government is under no more or greater obligation to compensate the widow in this case than it would be to compensate the widow of every other citizen who has been heretofore or may be hereafter killed by Indians or by assassins, and much less than it would be to compensate the widows of soldiers who have been killed while fighting the battles of their country, and to these a small pension only is given.

The committee therefore report back the bill, and recommend that it do not pass.